

VZCZCXRO8027
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHDO #0071/01 0291315
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 291315Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8671
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 3193
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 2257

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000071

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: HAMAS LEADER MEETS AMIR, DELIVERS FIERY SPEECH AT
"GAZA VICTORY RALLY"

REF: DOHA 42

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

(SBU) KEY POINTS

-- Hamas political leader Khalid Mish'al met January 28 with Amir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani in Doha. The meeting received prominent play in the local press.

-- After his meeting with the Amir, Mish'al addressed "The Doha Celebration of the Gaza Victory". He was introduced by Egyptian cleric and Al-Jazeera star Yousef Al-Qaradawi, who also spoke. Approximately 1,600 people attended the rally, according to one firsthand report, though media reports placed the total at 4,000. There was no official GOQ presence at the rally.

-- Mish'al praised the Amir for his direct financial support of the people of Gaza and called on other countries to do likewise. He said that donor countries should organize under the auspices of an Arab or Islamic NGO to finance the reconstruction of Gaza, bypassing the FQh-led national government.

-- Mish'al stressed that the PLO is no longer the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and that Hamas is trying to organize various factions into a new, unified national organization that would represent the interests of all Palestinians.

(C) COMMENTS

-- Mish'al's meeting with the Amir and subsequent speech are evidence that Qatar is showing no signs of taking a harder line against Hamas. Its ties to Hamas and support for Hamas remain strong. In fact, they might even be growing.

-- The prominent role played by Al-Qaradawi at the rally demonstrates that the GOQ gave at least tacit support for the event, despite the lack of official presence. Given that Al-Qaradawi's main platform is the GOQ-funded Al Jazeera Satellite Television Network, his participation also insured that the rally would enjoy wide media coverage.

End Key Points and Comments

1. (U) Hamas political leader Khalid Mish'al called January 28 on the Amir in his Amiri Diwan office. According to press reports, the two discussed "the latest developments in the Palestinian territories". Also present at the meeting were officials from the Amir's staff and the MFA.

¶2. (SBU) After his meeting with the Amir, Mish'al addressed "The Doha Celebration of the Gaza Victory" held at the Sheraton Hotel. He was joined by his deputy, Moussa Abu Marzouk, Palestinian Legislative Council member Salah Al-Berdawil, and Hamas political wing member Mohammad Nezal. Egyptian cleric and Al-Jazeera star Yousef Al-Qaradawi also spoke. While press reports estimated the crowd at 4,000 people, our Political Assistant who attended the peaceful rally placed the number at approximately 1,600. Participants shouted slogans condemning Israeli actions in Gaza. They also criticized U.S. support for Israel's actions. There was no official GOQ presence at the rally.

¶3. (SBU) According to the Political Assistant, Mish'al focused in his speech primarily on financing the reconstruction of Gaza. Mish'al praised the Amir for his direct financial support of the people of Gaza and called on other Arab and Islamic countries to do likewise. He said that donor countries should organize under the auspices of an Arab or Islamic NGO in order to finance the reconstruction directly. In issuing this call, Mish'al explicitly rejected a role for Fatah officials, saying that any money that went to Fatah leaders would go "into (their) corrupt pockets."

¶4. (U) In his remarks, Mish'al stressed that the PLO was no longer the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that Hamas is trying to organize various factions into a new, unified national organization that would represent the interests of all Palestinians. He also called on Special Envoy George Mitchell and the members of the Quartet to recognize Hamas, saying "All the political,

DOHA 00000071 002 OF 002

security, and military efforts will fail if they ignore the resistance".
LeBaron